

15 surviving veterans returned to their homes in Scott County. This first pilgrimage was made in three horse drawn buggies to three different cemeteries.

Mr. Speaker, this Memorial Day weekend, it is important we honor and pay tribute to all who have served or are currently serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. At a time when we have thousands of men and women still in harms way in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is essential we all take a moment to remember their great service and sacrifice.

The annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage of the Scott County American Legion Post 24 is a truly wonderful way to honor the men and women of the Armed Forces. I am sincerely grateful for their efforts.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1815) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes:

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. HUNTER, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, for including my amendment in the en bloc package.

It is the intent of Congress and in the interest of national security that we maintain a strong and healthy industrial base if we are to remain the strongest nation on Earth. Even the founder of modern-day capitalism and free trade, Adam Smith, recognized the need for a nation to be able to depend upon its own industrial and agricultural base and not rely on foreign sources for its defense needs. We cannot maintain our role as global leader on a pure services-based economy.

This amendment strengthens the Buy American Act, BAA, by restoring the original intent that more than 50 percent of the components in end products purchased by the Department of Defense shall be mined, produced, or manufactured inside the United States.

The Buy American Act originally passed Congress during the Great Depression. The intent of Congress was that to qualify under the Buy American Act, a company had to have substantially all of a product made, grown, or mined in the United States. However, regulations implementing the Buy American Act have subsequently redefined "substantially all" to mean simply greater than 50 percent.

Yet even that regulation has been weakened even further over the years. The Pentagon has used the "public interest" exception to waive the Buy American Act to treat the purchase of some foreign goods as if they were made in America. The original intent of the Buy American Act has been undermined by procurement memoranda of understanding, MOU, and other agreements with various foreign countries that permit the substitution of foreign components for components mined, produced, or manufactured inside the United

States. These are not treaties or trade agreements approved by Congress—these were Executive Branch agreements not subject to review by Congress.

Thus, the Buy American laws are basically worthless. There are so many holes in the law that it means nothing when a company says they comply with the Buy American Act. The exception—and it's a big one—is that the domestic content requirement doesn't have to be met if the items are procured from certain designated countries.

The Pentagon has MOUs with 21 developed countries that waive the Buy American Act because the Defense Department has determined that, for these countries, complying with the BAA is "inconsistent with the public interest." Basically, a company getting an award from the Pentagon can claim compliance with the Buy American Act without having to actually make anything here, as long as the components come from one of the 21 countries.

Too often, agencies claim they need the best for the least, implying that Americans can't make the best or compete on price and quality. But "best value" is the standard, which means price shouldn't be the reigning factor. The best value for Americans is to have a strong industrial base and we can't do that if DOD forces U.S. companies to compete on price with foreign companies that are owned, subsidized, or controlled by their governments.

It is important to remember that this amendment does not increase the share of the Buy American content, but simply codifies the content percentage of what is in existing regulation.

HEROES EARNED RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for H.R. 1499, the Heroes Retirement Opportunities Act. This important legislation allows military personnel serving combat zones to deduct contributions to their individual retirement plans.

The brave men and women of the United States armed forces risk their lives to defend our freedom and to continue the war on terror. These outstanding individuals are called upon to be stronger, braver, and tougher than they ever thought possible.

It is our duty to reward the men and women who risk their lives for our country, and the Heroes Retirement Opportunities Act accomplishes that goal. This bill will protect as much of their pay for the future as possible.

I know first hand the sacrifices our service men and women make. My husband retired 1st Lieutenant Dexter Lehtinen, was wounded in the Vietnam War by a grenade that almost took his life. Soon my stepson, Aviator 1st Lieutenant Douglas Lehtinen, is preparing to deploy to Iraq. I am certain that he will meet individuals who, like his father, have paid a tremendous price to uphold our ideals of freedom and democracy. By passing the Heroes Retirement Opportunities Act, we can do our part to assure a more certain future for those who risk their lives to protect ours.

To all the brave men and women who have served and now serve in our armed forces . . .

Thank you, on behalf of a grateful Nation.

TOM WOOD: LABOR LEADER OF THE YEAR!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today I acknowledge a great friend of labor, Tom Wood—named the "Labor Leader of the Year" by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Tom began his career as a Distribution Clerk with the United States Postal Service as a member of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU—Local 197) in January 1972. Within six months, he became a Shop Steward and started representing employees' rights. He noticed that other employees needed representation because they were too shy to represent themselves; he then became involved in assuring that employees would be treated fairly and justly.

In 1974, Tom was elected as Clerk Craft Director and subsequently has represented the APWU in several capacities since: Secretary-Treasurer, Executive Vice President and as the President of his Local Union since 1990. He has been the APWU chief negotiator for all local contracts for San Diego represented employees, and has made it a point to see that all postal managers treat employees with dignity and respect. Tom has established a reputation of vigorously representing his members, while still being responsive to the needs of the employer and their constant struggle with the "budget."

Tom has served as a member of the Board of Directors on the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council for the last fifteen years and as President since 2004. Several years ago, under his leadership, the APWU began looking with other labor unions in town to buy their own property, and became partners with the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFSCME, HERE, CWA and IATSE in Mission Valley's United Labor Center.

Congratulations Tom Wood, on your recognition as "Labor Leader of the Year"!

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT JACOB SIMPSON

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Ms. HOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, let us recognize the life and praise the sacrifice of an American Hero.

Just a few days ago, Sergeant Jacob Simpson was killed in action during a reconnaissance patrol in Iraq.

Jacob died as he lived—helping the people of Tikrit in their efforts to secure a peace, and realize their aspirations for a democratic society. Oregon mourns his passing. As a society we have too few of his character; we will all feel his loss for years to come.